

Marla Messing

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Acquisition of OL Reign

Principal/Partner

Los Angeles, CA; Seattle, WA

2023-2024

- Cultivated and secured prospective investments from a group of sports-oriented private equity and individual high net worth investors to pursue the acquisition of OL Reign, the National Women's Soccer League team based in Seattle, WA, that was being sold by Olympique Lyonnais ("OL")
- Worked closely with The Raine Group, the bank that was hired by OL to conduct the sale of the team, to become an official and credible bidder for the team
- Secured Joinder Agreements from the investor group and participated in the sale process as an official bidder
- Partnered with The Carlyle Group, the large private equity firm, which had also become interested in pursuing the acquisition of a National Women's Soccer League team
- Built pro forma financial models, analyzed and annotated voluminous due diligence materials, participated in meetings and due diligence sessions with Carlyle and The Raine Group, and along with McKinsey & Company, developed a business plan for the successful acquisition and operation of OL Reign
- Introduced The Carlyle Group to key players in the soccer and Seattle sports industry, including to Adrian Hanauer, the Control Owner of MLS's Seattle Sounders, to best position Carlyle for success in the acquisition
- Carlyle, along with the Seattle Sounders, became the majority owner of Seattle Reign FC, formerly OL Reign, in June 2024

National Women's Soccer League

Interim CEO

Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL

2021-2022

- Engaged by the NWSL to provide leadership and stability to the League following a coaching-abuse scandal, the suspension of play, and the abrupt resignation of the Commissioner and General Counsel. The collective result of the effort was a meaningful turn-around of the League from near collapse in October 2021, to stability, positive PR, new partnerships, and several expansion opportunities by the beginning of the following season in March 2022.
- Instilled confidence among League sponsors, broadcasters, and other partners of the benefits of maintaining their association with the League
- Supported continued commercial progress as evidenced by the addition of five new national sponsors totaling \$23 million over three years
- Restored trust with the NWSL Player's Association by creating a unique Common Interest Agreement to begin a joint NWSL-NWSLPA investigation into League cultural issues, which also helped staunch widespread negative coverage of the League
- Finalized the first-ever NWSL-NWSLPA Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Led the sale of the troubled Washington Spirit for a record \$35 million, and avoided litigation over myriad club issues
- Staged a successful Championship Weekend, with a nearly sold-out match, more than 500,000 viewers on CBS, and other successful ancillary events
- Created the first-ever League financial model for use in budgeting, financial management, and projections

- Oversaw the completion and approval of the 2022 League schedule, and conducted a televised NWSL Expansion and College Draft
- Led weekly Board of Governors meetings and meaningfully improved morale and productivity among League Staff

USTA Southern California
Chief Executive Officer

Los Angeles, CA
2019-2021

- Hired in February 2019 to rejuvenate the sport of tennis in the Southern California area, which had a storied history and previous success in developing world-class players and hosting professional tournaments
- Supervised a staff of approximately 30 full-time employees
- Re-invigorated the office with new employees and a renewed commitment to higher quality programs, improved levels of service, stronger social media narratives, and greater engagement with existing partners, USTA National and USTA Player Development
- Secured new marketing partnerships with Tecnifibre, the BNP Paribas Open, and the City of LA
- Created the first USTA SoCal Player Development Program and secured Paul Annacone, the former coach of both Roger Federer and Pete Sampras, as its director
- Participated in the development of a 30-acre training center and academic campus, which will feature approximately 40 tennis courts and a STEM academic facility operated by the Tiger Woods Foundation

L AFC/FC Barcelona
Consultant

Los Angeles, CA
2018

- Led the exploratory effort to establish a professional women's soccer team in the NWSL on behalf of a joint venture between LAFC and FC Barcelona
- Wrote a business plan whereby LAFC would contribute the business operations for the team and FC Barcelona, the soccer operations
- Worked with both the leadership of LAFC and FC Barcelona to prepare a strategy for securing the rights to the team, branding it "FC Barcelona LA," playing in Banc of California Stadium, and integrating the ethos of a Spanish football club into the Los Angeles community
- Straddled the fence between an organization that was focused primarily on revenues and profits (LAFC), and an organization that was focused primarily on brand expansion (FC Barcelona)

LA 2024 Olympic/Paralympic Exploratory (Bid) Committee
Vice President and Executive Director, Sport Leader Relations

Los Angeles, CA
2016-2017

- Invited to join the Bid Committee for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to help secure the Games on behalf of the City of Los Angeles
- Spearheaded the Olympic Games Innovation Network, a group of high-profile Los Angeles and Silicon Valley technology leaders who were willing to lend their personal and corporate support to the Los Angeles bid
- Developed a plan and narrative for bringing technology and innovation to the Games to make them more a) relevant to young people, b) engaging to spectators, c) efficient for athletes, and d) sustainable for Host Cities
- On September 13, 2017, the 2024 and 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games were awarded to Paris and Los Angeles, respectively, and the work of the LA 2024 Exploratory Committee came to an end.

1999 FIFA Women's World Cup
President/CEO

Los Angeles, CA
1996-2000

- Created and executed the strategy for the first large scale women's-only sporting event staged in the United States
- In a three-year period, built a comprehensive business organization from the ground up, which included 200+ employees in six U.S. cities
- Led all business operations, including corporate and retail (ticket) marketing, public relations and communications, general administration, and event operations
- Negotiated partnerships with stadiums, sponsors, broadcasters (ABC, ESPN, Lifetime), media companies (Sports Illustrated, Time), and ISL Marketing
- Created a unique marketing relationship between the Organizing Committee and the US Women's National Team, which allowed for the integration of national team and event marketing, as well as providing the players with additional compensation
- The 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup attracted a record 650,000 spectators and an estimated cumulative world-wide television audience of 800 million viewers.
- The event generated \$40 million in gross revenues, and a \$2 million surplus
- Executive Producer and Subject of Netflix film, The Girls of Summer, based on the story of the 1999 US Women's Soccer team and the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup

Major League Soccer
Co-Founder, Senior Vice President

Los Angeles, CA
1995-1996

- Served on the original 5-person management team that conceived and launched Major League Soccer, a Division I professional soccer league that is currently in its 25th year of operation
- Participated in presentations to prospective investor/operators that raised \$50 million from Philip Anschutz, Lamar Hunt, Robert Kraft, Stuart Subotnick, among others
- Headed the development of the league's initial licensing and corporate identity program in collaboration with Nike, adidas, Reebok and Puma
- Spearheaded event plans relating to the unveiling of the team and league logos, as well as the Opening Match in San Jose, CA

1994 FIFA World Cup
Executive Vice President

Los Angeles, CA
1992-1995

- Served on the 4-person Executive Management Committee
- Headed tickets sales and operations resulting in a record 3.5 million tickets sold
- Spearheaded the staging of the FIFA Final Draw, which attracted a world-wide television audience of 600 million people, and the first FIFA World Cup Expo
- Negotiated agreements and acted as a liaison for the Three Tenors Concert at Dodger Stadium and a series of promotional concerts at the Hollywood Bowl
- The 1994 FIFA World Cup generated \$350 million in gross revenues, and a \$70 million surplus

Latham & Watkins
Corporate Attorney

Los Angeles; NYC
1989-1992

CIVIC ACTIVITIES AND BOARD SERVICE

World Technology Games , Advisory Board	2023 -
City of Los Angeles , Commission on the Status of Women	2019 - Present
Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment Commission , Advisory Board	2015 - Present
Los Angeles Sports Council , Board of Directors	2019 - Present
2025 Laver Cup , Los Angeles Bid Committee	2021 - Present
Brown University , Parents Athletic Leadership Council	2015 - 2019

U.S. Soccer Federation , Board of Directors	2021 - 2022
University of Chicago Law School , Visiting Committee	2014 - 2019
Brentwood School , Board of Trustees	2005 - 2016
SoCal Committee for the Olympic Games , Board of Directors	2006 - 2010
U.S. Soccer Foundation , Board of Directors	2000 - 2005

HONORS

Champion in Sports Business , Sports Business Journal	2019
Woman of the Year , Women in Sports and Events	2000
Female Executive of the Year , Sports Business Journal	1999
Forty Under 40 , Sports Business Journal	1999

EDUCATION

University of Michigan	B.A.
University of Chicago Law School	J.D.

REFERENCES

Available upon request